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RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3981
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4899
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1289
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 3062
RUEHBD/AMCONSUL PERTH 1127
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 001741

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MLS, EAP/MTS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT YUDHOYONO'S PARTY CONTINUES TO STRUGGLE

REF: A. JAKARTA 1477

[1](#)B. JAKARTA 1441

[1](#)C. JAKARTA 1405

[1](#)D. JAKARTA 1366

[1](#)E. JAKARTA 1043 AND PREVIOUS

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: President Yudhoyono's Partai Demokrat ("Democrat Party" or "PD") continues to struggle to make a mark. The party is facing internal rifts, has not done well in recent gubernatorial contests, and is not doing particularly well in the polls. Observers say the party has not developed a clear political identity of its own and has no real platform (short of Yudhoyono's). How the party fares in the April 2009 legislative elections is vitally important to Yudhoyono given that potential candidates will need the support of roughly 15-25% of the legislature in order to be nominated for president. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) This message is part of Mission's background series on Indonesia's political parties ahead of the April 2009 national legislative elections. Ref a discusses the Hanura party, Ref b discusses the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), Ref c concerns the National Awakening Party (PKB), Ref d focuses on Golkar and Ref e analyzes the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS).

STRUGGLING TO MAKE A MARK

[1](#)3. (C) Partai Demokrat had positive beginnings. The secular-leaning party, which was established in 2001 by then candidate, now President Yudhoyono, made a splash in the 2004 legislative elections, netting roughly 7.5% of the vote. That total--very high for a brand new party--coupled with Yudhoyono's subsequent election as president, made the party a force in Jakarta.

[1](#)4. (C) That said, the party is now struggling. Contacts report that the party is riven into opposing camps and there is great tension. The major division in the party involves those who are considered very close to the President and those who want to set a slightly independent course. The

camp closest to Yudhoyono controls the party and is led by party chair, Hadi Utomo (a brother-in-law of the president). The opposing camp says the party is too close to the president, with too many links to his family members. This camp is also aggrieved because it says that party members close to the president have been given the best positions on the ballot for the legislative elections. In recent years, the tensions in the party have already led small groups to split off and form new parties (none of which are well-known).

15. (C) The party has also not done particularly well in recent gubernatorial races. In these races, Partai Demokrat has basically supported candidates in coalition with other parties. In general, candidates that it has supported have fared poorly, often finishing third or fourth. It has been involved in coalitions that have won, including in Jakarta and in South Sumatra, but none of Indonesia's 33-odd governors is actually a member of the party.

16. (C) The party is also not doing particularly well in the polls. Most recent polls show its support hovering around 7-8%, sometimes more and sometimes less. That result often puts it well behind the Golkar party, the Indonesian Party of Democratic Struggle (PDI-P) and the Islamic-oriented Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). Md. Quodari, a well-regarded pollster, told Pol/C on September 11 that he doubted that PD would make any sort of move in the polls any time soon.

KEY ISSUE: NO CLEAR IDENTITY

17. (C) Observers have told us that Partai Demokrat's main problem is that it has not developed a clear identity. "The

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party is correctly seen as doing the bidding of Yudhoyono and will rise and fall depending on his political fate" is how Doug Ramage, the head of The Asia Foundation, put it in a recent conversation. In terms of its platform, there is not much difference between what the party stands for and, say, the Golkar party, which also is secular-oriented and basically pro-free market in philosophy. Golkar, however, is much better known and much larger. In fact, many observers wonder whether Partai Demokrat will continue to exist on the political scene once Yudhoyono departs, with sections perhaps being subsumed into Golkar or other parties.

18. (C) Another problem for the party is that it is not very well financed. President Yudhoyono, concerned with the appearance of corruption, does not raise funds for the party. This contrasts with his predecessor, Megawati, who actively collected funds for the PDI-P.

POTENTIALLY A PROBLEM FOR PRESIDENT

19. (C) How Partai Demokrat fares in the April 2009 legislative elections is vitally important to Yudhoyono. According to Indonesia's somewhat complex rules, potential candidates currently need the support of 15% of the legislature in order to be nominated for president. It seems almost certain that the national legislature will raise that percentage figure to anywhere from 20 to 25% in the near-term.

110. (C) Given that he can only count on 5-10% of that figure coming from Partai Demokrat, Yudhoyono will have to look for other sources of support (as he did in 2004). That said, if his party does well, his bargaining power within any likely coalition would improve. Meanwhile, if the party does badly, Yudhoyono will be in the tricky position of almost going hat in hand to other parties. Though it is almost certain that he will ultimately get nominated, it will make his life much easier if his party does well, too.

HUME